THE RAGTIMER

MARCH/APRIL 1974

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

RECORDS FOR SALE

As a service to members, THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. is currently in a position to fill orders for the following. Price includes charge for postage.

JAZZOLOGY - $6.00 each

JCE-71 Ragtime: A New View - Donald Ashwander
(See Tex Wyndham's Record Review in this issue of THE RAGTIMER)
This record offers an interesting, if controversial, approach to contemporary experiments with ragtime.

EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC - $6.00 each

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The sale of reprint music as a reduced price package of many different compositions has brought favourable response. THE OFFER IS MADE ON A LIMITED BASIS. (No substitutions are permitted. Individual titles may be purchased at the regular catalogue price.) The economic advantage of "package" buying will be apparent.

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RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

WELCOME TO OUR
MANY NEW MEMBERS
.....
JOIN US IN
LIVING A RAGTIME
LIFE!
.....
THANKS FOR
MAKING US
PART OF YOUR
WORLD.

This issue of THE RAGTIMER is accompanied by two important enclosures:

(1) Your membership card for 1974 in THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. Please validate the card by adding your signature.

(2) Your copy of the currently revised SOCIETY CATALOGUE effective March 1974. New additions outnumber the deletions.

From time to time we mention our continuous problem of too much work for the time available in our small working group. As information to new members some of the sensitive areas should be restated. THE RAGTIMER is our vehicle for corresponding with members. Too often your personal letters requesting additional information go unanswered because of the lack of time. We do act as promptly as possible in filling orders. Payment must accompany orders so that the transaction can be completed in the same handling. We welcome letters from members which contain information that we believe to be of interest to a broad segment of our membership and extracts find their way into the "LETTERS" column of THE RAGTIMER. We do not accept or solicit paid advertising copy. Nevertheless we often give publicity to members concerning their activities and interests as well as other organizations and their products, whenever we believe such publicity is of interest to ragtimers generally. The material on file for future issues of THE RAGTIMER is constantly combed

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for a balanced selection. We always need your help. If you are a writer, send along an original article about your particular interests in ragtime. If you read for pleasure, send in clippings or photo copies of material you come across on any subject related to ragtime. If you attend ragtime concerts or similar events, send a copy of the program or write down your own impressions and send them along. In that way we can share some of our ragtime knowledge and experiences. Having delivered a sermon-like proclamation, we do issue a warm welcome to new members and with a tip of our ragtime hat we get back to the business of waving the ragtime banner.

Toronto has just said goodbye to Steve Spracklen of Joplin, Missouri. Steve spent over two months in the Times Square Room at the King Edward Hotel playing ragtime piano and providing the entertainment extras that built up a brand-new watering hole for ragtime devotees. Steve has promised that he will return in the fall. He now moves on to Western Canada to fill a repeating summer engagement at the Canadian National's Hotel MacDonald in Edmonton, Alberta. The Times Square Room got its start as a ragtime emporium by the good work of Alexander "Ragtime" Read. The welcome news is that Steve is being followed at the King Edward by our old friend "Ragtime" Bob Darch. Local ragtimers are invited to do their part by crowding out lovers of other kinds of music.

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IMPORTANT ADVANCE NOTICE!

THE 10TH ANNUAL RAGTIME SOCIETY BASH

1974

To be held at the CARA INN,
Toronto, on the weekend of
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1974.

This is the fourth successive year in
the same location and accommodation.

RESERVE THE DATE NOW ON
YOUR CALENDAR OF "MUSTS"
FOR THE FALL SEASON.

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DENVER JAZZ CLUB FEATURES RAGTIME

Ragtime is in debt to MAX MORATH for his twenty solid years of work as a professional entertainer in his rise to fame as a master of the one-man show. Max was always a fine ragtime pianist. But he is much more as the complete showman. His skills as an actor, humourist, and monologuist combine with his pianistic ability and a lot of hard research work for the staging of authentic vignettes. The result is a startling and fascinating portrayal of social behaviour in fashion at the beginning of this century. In all his work Max has compulsively found an opportunity to promote ragtime. Max is as much at home in performing the more demanding classical ragtime compositions as he is in vocalizing a rag song. Just as Fats Waller could raise an ordinary ballad to classic proportions, so can Max shake the dust off an obscure rag song and make it sparkle with a freshness that is uncanny.

Members of our SOCIETY and their friends should watch for an appearance of Max with his new show "THE RAGTIME YEARS" whenever he is on the road. You can't afford to miss out on an opportunity to relive the ragtime years as brought back to life by MAX MORATH.

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY is proud of Max's contribution to ragtime. The Denver Jazz Club is equally proud of Max, as a native son of Colorado, for his accomplishments. We are pleased to reprint a feature article from the Denver Jazz Club News, December 13, 1973, by FRED MOLDENHAUER. (Fred also gets the photo credit.)

MAX MORATH AND "THE RAGTIME YEARS"

Max Morath, that personable master entertainer and expert on the Turn-of-the-Century era of U. S. history, has just completed a lengthy (and very successful) run in Denver. He presented his new show "The Ragtime Years". Max is a familiar figure in the Denver area. His 12 show TV program "The Ragtime Era" ran on channel 6 in the early 1960's. He has also played several one night stands and engagements here, the most recent being at the Colorado Music Hall.

Max began his career here in Colorado, his home state. As a radio announcer he worked his way through Colorado College, majoring in English. He then broadened his experience in media and entertainment by working variously as an actor, announcer, pianist, and writer.

MAX MORATH

Morath's career probably really began when he was a kid. His mother who played some ragtime had several rag sheet music pieces on the Morath piano. Max learned these rags from the music and liked to play Maple Leaf Rag and Kitten on the Keys among others.

Beginning in 1954, Max spent six summers as music director and pianist for the Imperial Players in Cripple Creek, Colorado. During this period, he began to specialize in ragtime and turn-of-the century styles and repertory.

It was the ETV series that really launched Max into his one man show. In the ETV series Max described various facets of the turn-of-the-century music, events, people and mores. The dialogue was mixed with piano playing, examples of media of the time, (lantern slides, phonograph cylinders, etc.) and singing. To put this show together Max had to do extensive research on the era, roughly 1890 to WWI. He combed libraries, studied ragtime piano rolls, borrowed old sheet music, consulted historical societies, explored antique shops, rummaged through old magazines and interviewed survivors of the ragtime era.

The net result was the blossoming of a unique entertainment. Morath is thoroughly schooled in the era, and uniquely equipped to present it in living form. Max is gifted with front of the mouth, turn of the century voice, turn of the century looks, and as a final asset - his skill at playing those glorious rags.

The success of the "Ragtime Era" series led to many bookings for Morath at concerts and night clubs. It also led to a second and more ambitious NET series in which Morath presented social history of the era as reflected in its entertainment arts.

His successes mounted and eventually led him to the top rung of the show business ladder, however Max has continued to deepen his research and refinement of an already fine act.

In 1969 Max presented a unique one-man theatrical, "Max Morath at the Turn of the Century", which he opened in New York. Critical acclaim was unanimous and he played New York for eighteen weeks before launching a national tour.

In Max's new show "The Ragtime Years" he calls upon the tools from the past, his lantern slides, brisk dialogue, warm delivery... but there is something new added in dramatic lighting effects, added characterizations, split second timing with multi rear projected slides, and sound tracks. It's a fast moving, entertaining 2 hours Mr. Morath presents. It's hard to put ones finger on Max's appeal. Maybe it's his almost whimsical looks that fit the era like a glove, or his warm delivery that puts you on a one to one basis with an excellent entertainer, or his voice that has a warm quality but with a touch of brashness of the era. No matter what his appeal is, one always has a feeling that you are watching a performer who is an authority on his subject and personally enough involved to convey his enthusiasm to the listener.

While some of the real ragtime buffs would probably want to hear a little more ragtime solos, Max's show is a thoroughly entertaining 2 hours well worth seeing.

When asked about a possible revival of ragtime, Max feels that there is not a revival of ragtime going on but rather a discovery of Scott Joplin. Joplin's music is finally finding its place in the repertory of American music that it should have had years ago. The eastern music establishment found out that Joplin was black and that his music has credentials, a folk music from the grass roots. They should have known that years ago. Max says "The only thing that's going to make there be a real revival of Ragtime is if a bunch of young kids get together, probably with a group and write new stuff that's really true to the old forms." Max feels you can't consider that there is a ragtime revival until people are making a living playing ragtime.

Max does not consider himself a pianist in that he has never totally earned his living playing the piano. He says that he is "not that totally turned on by ragtime" not to the exclusion of other things. He is basically an entertainer, acting, writing, performing - creating the necessary elements that make up a show.

Morath's programs are (at least to this writer) a unique look into the window of that era, its music and its people.

Has Morath ever had a master plan to build where he is today? No says Max. Since he was 17 he just figured on the next gig. There is one thing, however, that he has consciously realized and that is that he would rather do most anything than play piano bars. "Piano bars are death... bad news." Max spends about 50% of his time on the road, however he probably spends more time with his family than most guys. When he wants to relax away from business he likes to spend time in the mountains or in his wood shop. He hopes to run "The Ragtime Years" three or four years about 3 months a year. He fills in with record dates, one nighters and so on.

Don't look for any reruns of the earlier ETV programs as they were done in black and white, which makes them obsolete in today's world of almost total color TV programming. Too bad.

The next time Max Morath hits town be sure and catch his show. You won't be disappointed.

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Jazzology JCE-71: 'Ragtime: A New View' - Donald Ashwander

Selections and year of composition: The Ragtime Pierrot (1965), Harlem River Houseboat Rag (1966), Sea Oats (1966), Late Hours Rag (1966), Empty Porches (1969), Voices, Voices (1966), Mobile Carnival Rag Tango (1966), The Winter Fields (1966). Astor Place Rag Waltz (1966), Moon Walk (1969), Peacock Colors (1967), Upstairs Rag (1966).

This is an album of piano solos of compositions written and played by Donald Ashwander, whose work has been heavily laced with ragtime's influence. Ashwander is also mindful of the many musical ideas that have come along since ragtime's heyday, and these, too, are given full expression in his compositions.

As Rudi Blesh's liner notes point out, one must expect contemporary ragtime composers to use all of the musical materials at their disposal - just as Scott Joplin did during his later years as he strained to expand ragtime's scope of expression. Thus, tempo changes, varying time signatures, out-of-tempo passages, unusual harmonies or chord progressions, and other now familiar and musically valid devices will - and should - find their way into today's ragtime compositions.

The trick, of course, is to introduce this material in such a way that the ragtime elements are enhanced rather than diluted. Or, stated another way, the results should be more or less easily recognizable as ragtime.

Ashwander's work here draws on such a wide range of musical ideas that this LP presents the most novel approach to the music yet exhibited on any record that claims to be ragtime. The selections abound with passages where Ashwander uses two contrasting melody lines, leaving the usually explicitly stated regular rhythm to be implicitly supplied by the listener. Ashwander commonly introduces brief out-of-tempo passages midway through his tunes to pave the way for introduction of new tempos for the trios. Often the right hand moves in a steady flowing line against off-beat left-hand figures, producing a kind of 'upside-down' ragtime effect. These and other practices are going to sound strange, and perhaps out of place, to the listener whose musical experience has been primarily in conventional ragtime and related music.

Ashwander's strengths as a composer are in the areas of harmony and rhythm. His piano has a full, rich sound, and if some of the harmonies are novel to ragtime, they never seem unpleasant or inappropriate. His rhythms move from a conventional stride into highly distinctive and personal patterns with ease.

On the other hand, Ashwander's weaker areas lie in his melodies and in the overall development of his selections. His melody lines often run on right into and through the strain endings so the listener suddenly finds himself in a repeat or a new strain without having experienced the sense of resolution that he expects to find at the strain's end. Similarly, the songs often do not build to logical and satisfying conclusions; instead, in several selections ('Sea Oats' and 'The Winter Fields' come to mind) a solid first strain is followed by a reasonably good second strain and then the pieces seem to lose direction - moving into complex but not very meaningful runs and figures. This latter problem is compounded by Ashwander's tendency to retard sharply at the very end of the tune which, to my ears, rather lets the performance wind down in music-box fashion.

The tunes that suffer from these deficiencies tend to run together in my mind. While they all exhibit Ashwander's unique approach, they are not sufficiently distinctive from each other and give the LP a sameness that makes it hard to listen to steadily for long.

On the other hand, when Ashwander gets it all together, the results are very good indeed. His 'Friday Night' and 'Business in Town', appearing on Jazzology JCE-52 (see our review in The Ragtimer for November-December 1969) are highly original and enjoyable compositions.

In my opinion, none of the tunes on this LP are up to the standard of these two, with the possible exception of 'The Ragtime Pierrot', a real dandy number with a jaunty feel and majestic ride-out. 'Moon Walk' is good too, 'Harlem River Houseboat Rag' and 'Mobile Carnival Rag Tango' have their moments, and in fact, there's very little on the LP that doesn't have something of interest. (I doubt, though, that many ragtimers will care for 'Voices, Voices' or 'Peacock Colors', both compositions with three-beats-to-the-bar rhythm and not much in them that tastes of ragtime.)

New ragtime composers deserve a chance to be heard. If all the tunes here don't hit home runs, we should remember that the same could be said of all the tunes by virtually any other ragtime writer. If these selections do have a certain sameness, maybe we can't blame Ashwander for being his own man, and besides, very few ragtime composers (Joplin, Joseph Lamb, Charles L. Johnson and perhaps a couple others) wrote enough rags in sufficiently varied styles to make up a satisfying LP.

Nevertheless, after repeated listenings, I still find sitting through this LP something of an effort. Perhaps listeners with wider musical tastes will savor the variety of Ashwander's sources of inspiration and find this music more accessible than someone like me, who never looks beyond the horizons of traditional jazz and ragtime. You're on your own.

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DID YOU READ THE NOTICE OF THE DATE OF THE RAGTIME SOCIETY 1974 BASH ON PAGE 4?

THE SCOTT JOPLIN RAGTIME FESTIVAL INC. AT SEDALIA

News Release - March 2, 1974

A "Share of the festival" campaign was announced today by R. W. Lehmer who will direct the effort as a kick-off to promote this Summer's Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival. Money raised will be used for the expected expenses that the Festival will incur prior to the actual event.

Those who contribute $5 or more will receive an attractive "Share of the Festival" certificate and membership in the Festival organization. Gifts of $25 or more will receive in addition to the certificate, two invitations to a special reception to be held during the Festival where contributors will have an opportunity to meet the guest artists.

The Joplin Festival is now incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the state of Missouri and was established for the purpose of promoting Sedalia's unique place in the history of American music and to honor Scott Joplin as the original composer of ragtime music. Any profits from the Festival will be retained by the corporation and will be used for further projects related to the group's purpose.

Persons wishing to offer their support by purchasing a "Share of the Festival" are encouraged to send their contribution to the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival, Post Office Box 967, Sedalia, Missouri 65301, or it may be given to any Board member. The certificate will be returned by mail and will receipt the gift.

Facsimile of Form received with News release.

THE SCOTT JOPLIN RAGTIME FESTIVAL
P. O. BOX 967, SEDALIA, MISSOURI 65301

I enclose my contribution checked below:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ ZIP _____

MEMBERSHIPS

_____ $5 Contributing

_____ $10 Associate

_____ $25 Sponsoring

_____ $_____

I am also interested in:

_____ Ticket Information

_____ The Piano Playing Contest

_____ Purchasing Advertising in Festival Literature

_____ Helping with Secretarial Work

_____ Working on a Festival Activity

_____ Other _____

THE RAGTIMER OF YORE

By William McCrostie

In 1967 the Ragtime Society moved from a News Letter to the members to the publication of the "Ragtimer".

The first issue in April, 1967 bore little resemblance to our present format. It was in a magazine type production and many of today's features had not yet appeared. The Reprint Club was advertising its third mail-out, two familiar names, Idamay MacInnes and John Arpin appear and the centre fold was Captivating Rag.

From then on old friends rapidly appear. The second issue displayed our now familiar logo and gives credit to Jack Thompson of Detroit as designer. As you leaf through this second issue - what do you know - Tex Wyndham's "Record Review" and another new feature "Something Doing" was there. One other now familiar sight - the old sheet music cover reproduced on the back cover. Starting in 1968 our present type cover made its appearance for the first time and it too was designed by Jack Thompson. In the second 1968 issue we went from the magazine format to our present form.

So now we are on familiar ground - format, logo, cover, "Record Review", "Something Doing", and on the back, the familiar cover reprint.

Packed into these back issues of the "Ragtimer" there is so much of interest to be read or reread. "Jelly Roll Morton, The Missing Chapter", "The Joplin Kid II", "The Incomparable Blind Boone", or "Those Ragtime Years" series by Jack Cuff and the many articles by Roger Hankins in his "Sounds Familiar". How about the stories and pictures of previous Bashes over the years?

Copies of the News Letter which preceded the "Ragtimer" are no longer available but there is a limited supply of all back issues of the "Ragtimer" in stock and these are being offered on a first come first served basis at the prices shown in the new Society catalogue.

Don't wait until these go the way of the News Letter - order your missing copies now.

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A TIP OF OUR RAGTIME HAT TO OUR MEMBER JONATHAN ELKUS

Jonathan Elkus, of Provincetown, Mass. introduced ragtime at the Annual Winter Concert of James Caldwell High School Band, held on February 9, 1974, as the composer and conductor. The following lists the program entry as well as the notes pertaining to the composition and its composer. When our kind of music is embraced by

each succeeding generation, the survival of ragtime is assured. Congratulations to Jonathan as a composer, conductor and promoter of the ragtime cause.

Program

Jonathan Elkus — The C C Rag

Commissioned by the JCHS Band
WORLD PREMIERE
Conducted by the Composer

Program Notes

Receiving its world premiere at tonight's concert, The C C Rag is the result of the 1974 commissioning project of the James Caldwell High School Band. It seemed most appropriate that an original rag be written for band in an era of renewed interest in nostaglia.

In The Best of Scott Joplin, Judith Lynn Porter wrote:

> "When one thinks about Ragtime music, almost everybody considers it merely something played in saloons by piano players with funny hats, striped shirts and sleeve garters . . . sitting under Tiffany lamps and slapping battered upright pianos that sound as if they had been dipped in water! Actually, Ragtime first appeared in an opera "Treemonisha", composed by the self-styled King of Ragtime, Scott Joplin in 1911.
>
> "Ragtime rhythms came to light in 1894. The piano style of the day had developed a bouncing, thump-pah bass and an ornate, syncopated melodic line. Because it sounded as ragged as a torn cloth, it was called "ragged time", then "ragtime". Its effect was intoxicating, and it spread rapidly into theatres, dance halls and . . via sheet music and piano rolls . . . homes through the country.
>
> "In the hands of authentic practitioners like Joplin, Ragtime was a disciplined form capable of astonishing variety and subtlety. Usually it has four 16-measure themes, and like a rondo, it habitually reprised its first theme immediately after the introduction of each succeeding one. Joplin did for the rag what Chopin did for the mazurka. His style ranged from tones of torment to stunning serenades that incorporated the bolero and the tango. Ragtime collapsed of overexposure and the rise of jazz."

In the early 1970's rags became the rage of "legitimate" pianists such as Joshua Rifkin and William Bolcolm, and most recently, with the recording by Gunther Schuller and The New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble of Joplin's The Red Back Book.

The C C Rag is Mr. Elkus' current manifestation of the earlier art form. Its melodies are unique, fresh, and full of vitality, yet subtle and elegant when necessary. The many solo passages were written for the current instrumentation of the band, a result of the composer's own close communication with the director on the development of the work.

Jonathan Elkus — Composer-Conductor

Jonathan Elkus was born in San Francisco in 1931 and received his education at the University of California, Berkeley, and at Stanford University. In 1957, he was appointed assistant professor of music and director of the instrumental program at Lehigh University where for sixteen years he conducted the University's famous concert and marching bands. In 1965 he was appointed to full professorship at Lehigh and in 1973 retired from full-time teaching to devote himself to free-lance composing and lecturing.

Elkus has served as Adjunct Professor at Moravian College, Composer-in-Residence at Gettysburg College and as Distinguished Visitor in Creative Arts at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He has conducted numerous high school and college band festivals, and has on several occasions conducted the Goldman Band in his compositions during the summer concerts.

Elkus' compositions include songs, chamber music, ragtime for piano and other instruments, and numerous theatre pieces including four operas and three musical plays. Elkus resides in Barnstable County, Massachusetts, and is consulting editor for three prominent New York publishing firms.

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RAGTIME AND - MARVIN HAMLISCH PUT "THE STING" ON MOVIE DIRECTOR GEORGE ROY HILL

The director of a current box-office favourite is George Roy Hill. The Universal picture film is well-named "THE STING". The motion picture soundtrack is available in record form (MCA-390 MCA Records Inc. 100 Universal Plaza, Universal City, California, U.S.A.)

Hill wrote the notes for the record Jacket. He gives an interesting and amusing account of the decision to blend the ragtime music of SCOTT JOPLIN with a movie story of the thirties. Here is the story in Hill's own words.

"I have often been asked about the background music I use for the films I direct and how I go about making the choice. Although there is no set procedure, I have a couple of rules I do follow.

First, I don't much care whether the music is in strict period or not. If I thought a jazz band would give me the feeling I wanted for a Roman Epic, I'd use it. It probably

wouldn't but I'd have no academic objection to trying it. Second, I don't like background musical accompaniment to dialogue scenes. I know it's used this way a great deal, and it certainly can be very effective. Many a love scene has been enhanced if not saved outright by the addition of a dozen or so violins in the background pumping in a little extra emotion that the scene itself might not have. But, generally, I find it a distraction and try to avoid it, except where I'm scared maybe the scene isn't working too good.

On the other hand, my early training was for a musical career, I still play the piano, and from the outset of a picture, I'm vitally interested in how it's going to be scored. So, I try to build into the film occasions where I can actually feature music in sequences that are specifically designed for it.

The way I go about choosing the particular kind of music for a particular film varies, but my experience on THE STING was not unusual. One day in the fall of '72, my oldest son insisted on playing for me a new recording of Scott Joplin's piano "rags" about which he was very enthused. Shortly thereafter, at a family gathering, a 13-year old nephew of mine sat down at the piano and stomped his way through "Swipsey", a charming Joplin "rag", and between the two, they had me hooked. I got the full collection of Joplin "rags" and started playing through them myself. During the course of this, I not only developed some favorites but I also discovered the great musicianship that went into his "rags", which I had previously dismissed as kind of honky-tonk improvisations. But they aren't at all. They are harmonically sophisticated, beautifully developed thematically, and they have a highly classical form.

During this same period, I was also coincidentally involved in THE STING, the story of two con-men in Chicago, Paul Newman and Bob Redford, who, in the 1930's set out to put the "sting" on a New York racketeer, Robert Shaw. Although Joplin's "rags" were written before our period, around the turn of the century, I kept connecting in my mind the marvelous humor and high spirits of his "rags" with the kind of spirit I wanted to get out of the film. I built montages and sequences into the picture where I could feature his "rags". In my first flush of enthusiasm, I decided to score it and play the piano myself, and I, actually, did play for my first "rough cut" of the film. But, on hearing it, the general feeling in the musical department of Universal Studios was that I had made a wise decision to abandon a career as a pianist for that of a director, and that I should be encouraged to stick to it.

So, I called Marvin Hamlisch. Marvin and I had known each other back in our Broadway days, when he was a kid just out of Julliard, working as a rehearsal pianist for a musical I was directing. We would sit during the breaks, and he would play old show tunes for me. He was a fine musician and, obviously, headed for bigger things. Since that time, he's gone to Hollywood and composed the music for the pictures, TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN, BANANAS, SAVE THE TIGER, and THE WAY WE WERE. In addition, he'd received an Academy Award Nomination and a Golden Globe Award for the title song for the movie, KOTCH.

Marvin liked the idea of using ragtime for the film, so we got together and the result is his score for THE STING. The selection of the material was easy, because his favorites were also mine - "The Entertainer", "Gladiolus Rag", "Pine Apple Rag",

"Ragtime Dance", and my favorite, I think, of all of them - the lyrical, haunting "Solace".

The MCA recording of the soundtrack also contains "Easy Winners" and 3 compositions by Marvin Hamlisch, memory prodding merry-go-round music and a jazz violin solo of "Little Girl" featuring Bobby Bruce.

The Los Angeles Times of Friday February 15, 1974 contained an article written by its entertainment editor, Charles Champlin which adds considerable biographical information concerning Marvin Hamlisch. The following is a reprint of the clipping sent in by our member William Payne of Bangor, Pa.

"DON'T SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER

An album I have enjoyed as much as any other in recent months was "The Red Back Book", a performance of Scott Joplin rags as arranged by Gunther Schuller. To everyone's surprise (including, I suspect, the people at Angel Records), the album became a best-seller and led the classical chart for weeks.

Another of its admirers, obviously, was film director George Roy Hill, who is himself a pianist. He chose the Joplin songs as the out-of-period but hugely effective music for "The Sting".

Now Joplin is a best-seller again, through the soundtrack album. And one of the numbers, "The Entertainer", has become a million-selling single for Marvin Hamlisch, the ebullient young film composer who adapted the rags for "The Sting" and played the piano very tastily indeed.

"People have said that ragtime is wrong for the Chicago gangster era," Hamlisch, who at 30 looks 19, remarked at lunch the other day. "But George chose it - and it was his marvelous decision - because "The Sting" is really about con men of any time. This was Chicago in the 30's but I'm sure they existed in ancient Rome.

.....

"The only fight we had was a running gag about who was going to get to play the piano. He had made a temporary music track for the picture. At the first recording session, I said when the red light went on, 'the kid who starts is the kid who finishes.'" Hamlisch started and Hill wrote some gracious liner notes for the album.

Hamlisch has had quite a year. Studying the lunch menu, he said, "Ah, yes, a 'Way We Were' salad to start, I think. Then something with a 'Sting' in it and maybe a slice of 'Tiger'. No, 'Save the Tiger.'"

The menu was considerably less imaginative than that, but Hamlisch had established a few credits. His score for "Save the Tiger", incorporating the big band sound of the late 30's, including Bunny Berigan's "I Can't Get Started", was uncommonly effective.

He has lately won the Golden Globe for best song for "The Way We Were" and he would seem to be a short-odds favorite to cop an Oscar for it as well, thanks in part to Barbara Streisand's eloquent recording, although the Academy is sometimes unpredictable

musically. He is eligible for three Oscar nominations (we will all know Tuesday morning): for song and score on "The Way We Were" and for his adaptation on "The Sting".

.....

Hamlisch is a New Yorker who studied at Juilliard and Queens College, dropped the college for a chance to work as a rehearsal pianist off Broadway, wrote rock songs ("Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows" became a hit) and was fatefully hired to play piano at a cocktail party given by Sam Spiegel.

"I've always been a theater nut and I could even answer requests for the obscure tunes from 'Pins and Needles'. Sam was very impressed and asked me to come in and talk about a movie he was making, 'The Swimmer'. I knew he wouldn't want to hear my rock things, so I dashed home and wrote a semiclassical theme, drawing on my Juilliard education. What chutzpah!

"I went in and said, 'Here's your theme.' Sam was so dazzled he spent three hours phoning his friends and making them listen to me play it."

Hamlisch was 20 and "The Swimmer" became his first score. The music received better reviews than the movie and he was launched. "The Prisoner of Second Avenue", coming up next, will be his 14th film score.

His work has varied from the 60-piece sonorities of "The Sleeper" to the piano-and-small-combo pleasures of "The Sting" to the period-evoking big band sounds for "Tiger" and "The Way We Were". But that's the way film music goes these days, and it's the only way he'd have it.

"The only thing that matters is, does it help the movie, is it effective? The composer is the last guy to get involved, and I used to say, 'How dare they ask me to help them solve their problems?' Now I say, 'Yeah, maybe I can help.' "

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FESTIVAL

Our latest information is that the St. Louis 10th Annual National Ragtime Festival, 1974, will be held at the "Goldenrod Showboat" on the St. Louis Levee in July this year. For further particulars write to Frank C. Pierson, Goldenrod Showboat, 400 North Wharf Street, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. 63102.

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FESTIVAL

The Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival is to be held at Sedalia, Missouri, July 25 to 27, 1974. The official program and accommodation information has not as yet been released. For further particulars write to The Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival Inc., Post Office Box 967, Sedalia, Missouri, U.S.A. 65301.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

May I express my delight and joy in attending our recent 'bash' of October 1973, my first, following three unsuccessful tries.

As I sat there at table taking in the proceedings; fine performances of that great sounding music, I gradually realized what I was hearing. Some of the compositions of our venerable and well-loved Dr. Eubie Blake, who played later and who is still the master; also the youthful John Arpin playing so magnificently such inspired music and modestly dedicating his fascinating transcription of 'Memories of You' to its creator, Eubie. Finally, I got the message, and what a message(!) as I observed that huge overflow crowd with the complete absence of any confusion, I knew it just had to be THAT SPECIAL MUSIC - RAGTIME!

Noting the age of many of the performing artists who played banjos, guitars, pianos and horns, I realized the generation gap was non-existent; and -- "they all played ragtime".

My final and happiest conclusion was "Ragtime is alive and well and living in the minds and hearts of thousands" of whom I am happy to be one. I would, indeed, be very remiss not to mention that show-biz expertise of one Tex Wyndham as a super Master of Ceremonies.

Lou Hooper
Montreal, Canada

(Ed. Comment: Lou is one of our elder members who, like Eubie Blake, made his mark on Broadway in the early days. Our thanks to Lou for his inspiring comments.)

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Have seen as of yet no report from Eubie Blake's European tour. I can only bear personal witness of his phenomenal impact at the Molde festival despite antagonistic weather, planning and lots of other attractions, mostly fairly avantgarde jazz.

This festival took if I remember right four days that for me were made bearable solely due to the presence of the Blake aggregation. But then I may be biased. At any rate, this town on the Norwegian west coast which likes to boast of itself as the city of roses splendidly bejewelled by a couple of dozens of dazzling white peaks out in the archipelago turned out to be a bedrizzled heap of fish factories, a steel and glass maniacs

dream of a city hall, and a hotel where everybody kept outwardly dry, everybody that is except the audience which consisted of thousands of jungle-green hitchhikers camping out in the surrounding mud.

Blake stole the show from the first day with big press coverage of his descent by plane followed a day later by an hour-long press conference with Blake reminiscing some complicated personal experiences from around 1890. The gentlemen of the press didn't seem to know too much of the Blake side of jazz history so they started asking him what tunes had he written and Blake could only throw up his hands in mock despair.

He was supposed to play during the final days but could of course not keep from sitting in at a dixieland cafe and jamming lodge high up on the mountain. The actual concert was a sort of a cross between revelation and culture shock for a lot of the attending. Preceding were Lee Konitz and cohorts with Konitz cooler than usual due to faulty mikes and amps and the contrast was startling. Apparently Norway was never before exposed to ragtime and when Blake started announcing the Merry Widow and Stars and Stripes a few just looked unbelieving. Discoveries were made that night and response enthusiastic. And even though I knew the music from vinyl there was a couple of dimensions added with hearing the actual dynamics and witnessing the enormous energy put into a live performance which seems to be the hallmark of the older breed of artists.

Peter Lundberg, Goteborg, Sweden

(Ed. Comment: Thanks to Peter for a delightful eye-witness account of Eubie Blake's appearance last year at the Molde Jazz Festival in Norway.)

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Member Frank W. Smith, 111 East Locust Street, Watseka, Ill. 60970 is anxious to get copy of biography of Blind Boone. "Blind Boone, his Early Life and His Achievements" published 1915 by Burton Publishing Co., Kansas City, Mo. Author Melissa Fuell. Also interested in any information anyone may have on Boone.

Mrs. Joan Mate, 293 Kaplan Avenue, Hackensack, N. J. 07601 would like a copy of "Cannon Ball" Joseph Northrup published by Victor Kremer, Chicago. Anyone able to oblige?

Mrs. D. C. Rowe, 10 Aldersgate, New Mills Nr. Stockport, Cheshire, England would like to correspond with ragtimer's wife; or if any ragtime devotees in area, they might get in touch.

H. J. Bagnall, 524 Cole Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 2B3 would like to contact members in Ottawa area. He is a long time member and plays piano.

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CAPSULE

INFORMATION

RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information and any particulars given or comments made hereunder do not convey any opinion or automatic endorsement of the SOCIETY. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

2 - LP Records - King of Folk Ragtime - Trebor Tichenor (Dirty Shame Records Stereo 2001) contains 14 piano solo performances by Trebor - Includes compositions by Wenrich, Joplin/Hayden, Drumheller, Marshall, Hunter, Turpin, Richmond, Broady, Campbell, Harney, plus 3 of Trebor's own works.
available from Dirty Shame Records, P. O. Box 5217, Hannegan Station, St. Louis, Missouri, U. S. A. 63139 ($5. 95 P. P. U. S. add $1. 00 other countries)

- The New Black Eagle Jazz Band (On The River) Dirty Shame Records Stereo 2002 recorded aboard Goldenrod Showboat 1973 during 9th Festival - 7 man band with "Something Doing" - Terry Waldo sub. Pianist and Eli Newberger, Tuba. - 8 tracks range thru Rags - blues - Jazz to Pop (same source and price)

Book - The Art of Ragtime by William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedel - (cloth bound, 250 pages) deals with "Form and Meaning of an Original Black American Art". Published by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U. S. A. 70803 ($10. 00 in U. S.)

LP Record - PIANO RAGTIME on "Petit Journal" Vol. 1 with MARC BERCOVITZ (PROM 1 - T) contains 12 numbers - Joplin, Scott, Turpin, Lamb, Eubie Blake, etc. Recommended by member Henri Parisot, Sceaux, France. Available from Promophone Club Promotionnel de Musique Contemporaine, 61 rue Meslay - 75003 Paris, France.

ORGANIZATION - For information on the activities of the DENVER JAZZ CLUB write to Membership Chairman, Deane Cox, 6180 S. Jasmine St., Englewood, Colorado 80110.

LP Record - "The Sting" featuring the music of Scott Joplin - Original Motion Picture Soundtrack - music conducted and adapted by Marvin Hamlisch (includes Solace, The Entertainer, Easy Winners, Pineapple, Gladiolus, Ragtime Dance). Picture Stars are Paul Newman, Robert Redford and Robert Shaw. Record Number MCA-390, MCA Records Inc., 100 Universal Plaza, Universal City, California, U. S. A.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - in the Odyssey Lounge at the top of the Hyatt Regency, Toronto, 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

RAGTIME BOB DARCH - in the Times Square Lounge, King Edward Hotel, King Street, Toronto, Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

DON EWELL - at the Life Lounge, 3233 N. Ocean Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with Andy Bartha and the Deep South Dixieland Jazz Band.

DAVE FLOWITT - at the Brunswick Hotel, 481 Bloor St. W., with the Climax Jazz Band, Wed. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

- at Grossman's Tavern, 379 Spadina Ave., with Dr. MacJazz band, Thurs. 8:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tues., Fri. and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX - at Cascade Room, Bon Marche, Tacoma, Washington March 4 to April 6

- at Legend Room, Bon Marche, Seattle, Washington April 8 to May 4.

RAGTIME $ BILL MAYHERCY - at Ramada Inn, Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Thru Easter, 1974.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Michigan Friday nights.

MAX MORATH - and his new show "The Ragtime Years" at Hayloft Dinner Theater, Manassas, Virginia, April 8 to May 5. Currently on tour college circuit and other one night concerts.

DR. ELI NEWBERGER - and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass. Thurs. 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury.).

TOM NOEL - on the road with his living portrayal show "Mark Twain at Home". Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas, April 19, Yavapai State College, Prescott, Arizona, April 22.

CHARLIE RASCH - with Sister Kate, at Little Caesars, 15060 Eureka Road, Southgate, Michigan, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

TOM SCHMUTZLER - and the Hardware City Temperance Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon, Conn. - Saturdays.

BOB SEELEY - at Charlie's Crab Restaurant & Lounge, 3230 Pine Lake Road, Orchard Lake, Michigan, Monday thru Saturday.

STEVE SPRACKLEN - at Canadian National's Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton, Alberta thru summer 1974.

DAN SUMMERS - and the New Charleston Chasers (with the ODJB sound), at Speak Steak House, Whirlpool St. at Cleveland Avenue, Niagara Falls, N. Y., Saturday nights and some Friday nights.

TREBOR TICHENOR - and the Saint Louis Ragtimers, on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. (Also do playing dates on the riverboat Beck Thatcher).

TERRY WALDO - at Deibel's Restaurant, German Village, Columbus, Ohio, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly, at The Surrey Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

SPARKLES

HIGH CLASS

RAGTIME TWO STEP

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By

CHAS. B. ENNIS

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